

Couch, Genero Hernandez, Randy Couch, Daniel Barrett, Abraham Ahumada, Branch Vancourt, C.J. Finke, Dean King, Dean Charriez, Jesstin Fox, and Ryan Soto.

I congratulate the Richland Springs Coyotes on their national and State championships and wish them the best of luck next season.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION SPEECH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, this evening the President, in bowing to the electoral reality of last November and, with finally some recognition of real problems confronting our Nation and our citizens, is about to begin, in his State of the Union, to address the issue of the need for an expansion of health insurance. Forty-six million Americans lack health insurance, 1 million more per year every year this President has been in office. He will also address the issues of energy efficiency, energy independence, and global warming; and we welcome some remarks from the President in those areas. And he is going to address the debt and the deficit.

We welcome this new focus on these extraordinarily important and difficult issues that have been pretty much ignored during his Presidency. Unfortunately, his rhetorical U-turn is not going to be matched by the reality of his proposals. In order to provide health insurance to 46.1 million people who don't have it, he says we should tax people who do have health insurance.

Now, that is interesting because the President, of course, gets his health insurance for free. And his proposal would also extend tax benefits to the wealthiest among us because many people who don't have health insurance can't benefit from tax breaks. They don't pay Federal income taxes.

That is not a real solution. A real solution would be to take on the anti-trust immunity of the insurance industry, estimated to raise \$45 billion, saving consumers that money. That is the cost of uninsured health care in America.

Energy efficiency and independence, well, we will wait and hear what the President has to say. But remember a year ago, he talked about our addiction to oil, and all his policies have been designed to further that addiction thus far.

On the debt and the deficit, he still wants to cut taxes for the wealthiest

among us. He wants to extend, to make permanent, all of his tax cuts; exempt all estates from taxes; and says he is going to balance the budget. Well, if he was really going to do that by the year 2012, he would have to eliminate the Federal Government except for the Department of Defense, a little bit of the Department of Homeland Security, because the projected deficit is as large as about the rest of the discretionary budget if his tax cuts are maintained. You have to begin to raise revenues from the wealthiest among us to address this gaping maw hole, the deficit.

And then there is one very important problem where he isn't even pretending to change direction, one where a majority of the American people and a majority of the United States disagree with the President's nostrum, and that is his desire to escalate the war in Iraq as a way out. Defying his own Joint Chiefs of Staff and the senior officers and advisers in the military; defying the Prime Minister of Iraq, who said we shouldn't put more Americans into Baghdad; defying the American people; and defying this Congress, the President is going to offer us more stay the course in Iraq and try to spin it into a new policy that will lead to success.

We want to succeed, but to succeed, the Iraqi Government has to be willing to take on some of its own problems. The Shiias and the Sunnis have got to stop slaughtering each other trying to settle a 1,400-year-old grudge and putting us in the middle of their civil war. They have got to begin to meaningfully share power, and they have got to begin to resolve their own issues. And the U.S. sending more troops is not going to lead them down that path.

So I fear that what the President is proposing there will lead to more conflict. It may look good in the short term, but long term it is not going to resolve this very difficult issue.

I hope that the President offers us some real changes in direction tonight and not just a rhetorical U-turn to bow to the reality of the elections.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WE NEED A NEW DIRECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, a State of the Union Address is an opportunity for the Nation to take stock of where it is at this exact moment.

It is obvious that the entire domestic agenda has been swallowed up by the war in Iraq. With over 3,000 U.S. soldiers killed in action; with over 650,000 innocent Iraqi civilians dead in the

war; with this Nation's having spent over \$400 billion in the war and, according to Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, will spend up to \$2 trillion for the war in Iraq, we have seen the hopes and the aspirations of the American people for more jobs, for better housing, for decent health care, for education for their children just swept aside as the administration focuses intently not only on the war, but escalating the war.

I think all across this country people are hopeful that America will have a new agenda, one which will recognize that we must focus on America's basic needs. It is time for America to come home. Come home and start taking care of the needs of our people here for decent housing, the needs of our people for health care. Over 100 million Americans either have no health insurance or lack access to adequate health insurance, and yet we are about destroying the health of the people of Iraq instead of focusing on the needs of our people here back home.

Martin Luther King said it years ago in his speech at Riverside Church in New York. He said that the hopes and the aspirations of people of two countries were being set aside. He was speaking of Vietnam and the United States. Today the hopes and the aspirations of people of two countries, of Iraq and the United States, are being set aside in this head-long rush to escalation of a war.

Now, what should be our policies, and what steps should we take? First of all, this isn't just about opposing escalation. I would say that is pretty easy to do based on the record of this administration's conduct of the war. But we should be taking a strong stand against the occupation. We should be demanding that the United States end the occupation, that we bring our troops home, that we close our bases. That then will set the precondition that is necessary for the world community to come together and support a peacekeeping and security mission in Iraq. That then sets the stage for the Iraqi people to reach a moment of possibility for reconciliation between the Shiites, the Kurds, and the Sunnis. It is absolutely imperative that the United States announce that it is going to end the occupation because it is the occupation which is fueling the insurgency.

Tonight the Nation is waiting for a new direction. It is not looking for more war. It is not looking for more casualties. It is not looking for a continued destruction of our domestic agenda. So we are here to state that there is a plan, and I have submitted it.

The Kucinich 12-point plan is the plan that sets the stage for America to take a new direction. That direction is out of Iraq, but it is also a direction of reconciling with the world community because the way this administration responded to 9/11 separated us from the world community. At a moment when the whole world was ready to embrace the United States in its suffering and

to work with us to meet the challenges of security, we set ourselves apart with strategies of unilateralism, first strike, and preemption. We need to replace that with strategies of embracing the world community, of working together, of recognizing that the world is interdependent, interconnected. And because of that, we understand the common fate which we all have on this planet to work together, to put together structures of peace internationally.

And the United States must take that direction. We must engage with Iran and Syria. We must reach out to the region and look for a solution and find that solution which will enable us to bring our troops home. We can have our troops home in 3 months if we can come up with an agreement and a new direction, and we should be about that work.

Mr. Speaker, the American people want health care. The American people want jobs. The American people want education for their children. The American people want retirement security. And our whole domestic agenda is sacrificed for this war.

It is time for a new direction. It is time for a State of the Union which celebrates what we have in America that needs to be improved, which restates the American vision of a Nation for all, and which takes us away from policies of endless war.

NAFTA AND THE DRUG TRADE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this evening we are going to listen to the President of the United States, and I have no doubt in the State of the Union he will talk about the war on terrorism, and he will talk about the need to create jobs in Iraq to stabilize the terrible situation there, and he will talk about more funds for reconstruction of Iraq. Our Nation has already spent over \$500 billion and rising in that sad country.

But I would like to focus on the United States just for a second, if I could, and talk about the terrorism focused inside of this country and point out that 90 percent of all the drugs that are smuggled into this country enter through our border with Mexico, and that is according to our State Department. In fact, under NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, which his father negotiated, drug and drug-related smuggling across the Mexican border has risen to over \$142 billion a year, according to our Drug Enforcement Agency.

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Every single community in our country is affected, not just border communities. Every single jail, every single sheriff, every single law enforcement official, every single prison. Our com-

munities are infected with burglaries, with robberies, with personal assaults related to the abuse of drugs in our country. I will be very interested to see what the President has to say about that war on terrorism tonight that affects every single neighborhood in this country.

NAFTA brings a significant increase in cargo traffic across our southern border and thus strains the enforcement efforts of our border patrols and enables traffickers and terrorists. In fact, 9,300 commercial trucks cross our border daily. 9,300 more trucks. And do you know how many we inspect? Five percent. Five percent. So there is a 95 percent chance for smugglers who are out there, whatever they want to get into this country, that will be their rate of success.

Now, the Mexican Government is working very hard to build a four-lane highway which they call La Entrada al Pacifico, the Entrance from the Pacific. And the idea there would be to redirect so much of the traffic from Asia, from China, these big ships that are bound for the United States, from the west coast, Ports of Los Angeles and Oakland, further south, and stretch the actual shipping lanes into Mexico versus the United States. It is estimated that as much as 30 percent of the truck traffic will also be diverted from California and El Paso to the ports of entry at Presidio.

The idea is that the highway into our country would begin further south where goods would come in in deep-water ports, and the completed route would save up to 4 shipping days for goods moving between the Pacific Rim countries and Texas, which would be one of the major ports of entry into our country.

The problem is that we really haven't addressed the issue of drug smuggling as a part of this. Ninety percent, again, of all drugs smuggled into this country come over the Mexican border. That area has become almost lawless. Hundreds of murders related to drug trafficking go unaddressed both on the Mexican side of that border and our side. We really need to have a border enforcement organization that is negotiated by treaty by amending NAFTA in order that we can have proper enforcement along that very porous part of our country which makes us so vulnerable.

Our border guards are overwhelmed. We know that pedestrian traffic has increased by 55 percent across that border, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, and all kinds of vehicular traffic. Can you imagine that one place on that border accounts for 70 to 90 percent of the cocaine sold in the United States smuggled through that region? In fact, the drug cartels have moved up their major source of operation in Colombia up to the state of Juarez, and now control the state of Juarez just south of the State of Texas. This is real terrorism poised at our country.

Let's say the people in the Middle East want to get something into the United States. You mean to tell me they haven't thought about this? Of course they have. And we know that drug presence leads to more violence and more corruption at every level.

An unreleased Drug Enforcement Agency report notes that drugs, weapons, people traffickers, and terrorist organizations have to cross the border from Mexico into the United States, and they will use one of the many corridors available to them. I hope that the President of the United States tonight talks about securing our southern border.

[From the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, Dec. 27, 2006]

CROSSROADS OF CONFLICT—WORLD TRADE BRIDGE HAS CHANGED THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER, FOR GOOD AND BAD

(By Sara A. Carter)

LAREDO, TEXAS.—The mammoth globe on the World Trade Bridge spins in the glow of the Texas moon, welcoming hundreds of cargo trucks from Mexico to the United States' largest inland port.

Nighttime is the slowest time for the bridge.

During the day, literally thousands of trucks cross the span into the U.S., headed for destinations scattered throughout the Midwest and East and north into Canada.

Traffic between Laredo and Nuevo Laredo, on Mexico's side of the bridge, is only expected to increase in coming years with Mexico anticipating billions of dollars in new trade, mainly from China, on its way to the United States, according to a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration executive summary.

Increasing trade has, however, been matched by growth in corruption and death in both border cities, though U.S. and Mexican officials are loathe to admit it.

\$142 billion in drug trade between the U.S. and Mexico, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

86,000 Transportation jobs created as a result of the World Trade Bridge.

9,300 Commercial trucks pass through the World Trade Bridge daily.

90% of all drugs smuggled into the United States enter through its border with Mexico.

The prospect of expanded trade in Mexican states controlled by some of the country's most dangerous cartel leaders could pose serious national security challenges for the United States, an internal DEA report obtained by the Daily Bulletin explains.

The report, which has never been released, examines how already strained federal law enforcement agencies monitoring border security and narcotics will be challenged by not only Mexican and South and Central American drug trafficking organizations, but also by Asian cartels.

With slim resources to monitor cargo and inadequate border security measures in place, it will be next to impossible for U.S. agencies to stem the tide of contraband expected to enter the country from Mexico, the DEA report warns. Agencies will be hard-pressed to monitor the billions of dollars in contraband expected to enter the nation if U.S. officials don't take heed.

"Contraband can be anything from narcotics, pirated videos, humans or weapons of mass destruction," said David Monnette, spokesman for the DEA in El Paso, Texas. "These drug trafficking organizations know that we are spread thin, and many times they use legitimate trade routes to move their contraband into the United States."